

**Additional notes for teachers:**

Many of the notes comprise deeper matters which have arisen in the course of preparation of the Students Notes. Other material has been appended for the purpose of providing background, explanations or interesting detail.

**Lesson 12****1. DIFFICULTIES**

This lesson is not an easy one to teach; the natural tendency is to sympathise with Esau who was deprived of his birthright and blessing, and to condemn Jacob for his deception. The unbeliever emphatically denounces the Bible of its God for what he calls the injustice” of the transaction: and even those who regard themselves as believers in the Scriptures have contrasted unfavourably the character of Jacob, with that of Esau.

False views such as these, spring from a one-sided view of the incidents recorded in the Bible story and judge the situation entirely by human standards. Jacob’s life is far more meritorious than Esau’s, despite the guile practised on Isaac. Far from being one to be despised, Jacob is a shining example of spiritual persistency – one for us to emulate to obtain the blessing.

**2. THE FIRSTBORN AND THE BIRTHRIGHT**

The younger sons in the family were to respect and honour the first-born as the hereditary head of the family. As the family grew, without breaking up into smaller units, and took on the status of a tribe, all the firstborn would become “lesser chiefs”, acknowledging one as the supreme leader who was firstborn of firstborn .. See Num. 13:3; 7: etc.

This was known as the birthright, normally the prerogative of the eldest son (the firstborn, Gen. 49:3) but sometimes for various reasons, taken from him and given to another (I Chron. 5:1-2).

Notice God’s intention to “make (Jesus) His firstborn” (Ps. 89: 26-27). He, as the last Adam, has been elevated to that position (Col. 1:15; 1 Cor. 15:45) as the result of the fall of the first Adam due to disobedience.

**3. ESAU AND FORNICATION - Heb. 12:16**

Then the realisation came to Isaac that he had blessed Jacob and not Esau, his indecision vanished. Perhaps he trembled at the thought that in the normal course of events he would have blessed Esau, thereby “frustrating” God’s purpose. Now he recognised the divine hand and “trembled”. He now accepted God’s will; “Yea and he shall be blessed”.

**TEACHING METHODS**

1. Introduce the lesson with the remarkable divine prophecies concerning the unborn twins Esau and Jacob.
2. Contrast the characters of Esau and Jacob, demonstrating the spiritual qualities of the latter in valuing the birthright and the blessings.
3. Consider the bestowal of the promises upon Jacob at Bethel in the perspective of Abraham’s and Isaac’s receipt of the same promises.
4. Demonstrate the surety of God’s Word in the events which unfold in the life of Jacob.